Amendments to the Specification

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0002]:

[0002] The present invention generally relates to recovery audits, and specifically to automated tools for web-based review, ~~validate~~ validation, approval, and submission of claims identified by recovery audits.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0003]:

[0003] Companies lose millions of dollars annually because of unpaid invoices, double payment, discounts and allowances not ~~received and~~ received, and general overpayments. While some of these mistakes are rectified by annual audits performed by a company's accounting firm, such audits are generally not thorough enough to identify all the recoverable loses due to erroneous business transactions. As a consequence, companies hire firms to provide recovery audit services directed at identifying overpayments and collecting the monies due their clients for such erroneous payments.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0004]:

[0004] The successful execution of a recovery audit is dependent on a number of factors, including the audit planning process and the collection of relevant documentation. The collection of relevant documentation is becoming more and more difficult. Where buy/sell transactions were once done almost exclusively on paper, today's business environment often results in these transactions being consummated via electronic documents. When these electronic documents are not part of a larger enterprise software solution (i.e., electronic invoicing systems), then accessing this information can be difficult. It is widely appreciated that companies are communicating with one another via e-mail in an ever-increasing fashion. Included in these e-mails are price commitments, notifications of price ~~changes and~~ changes, and

vendor agreements with special discounts and allowances, all of which may be necessary documentation to have an effective audit.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0008]:

[0008] The systems, methods and computer program products of the present invention provide an expedited process for reviewing, validating and approving claims in a recovery audit. The claims are electronically packaged with supporting documents and securely distributed to clients. In one embodiment, a client receives an e-mail notice that one or more claims are ready for review, and via an Internet browser can review, approve and ~~comments~~ comment on one or more claims prepared by an auditor. Because the support documentation is immediately available, all parties have the same material as the basis of the claim before them to understand the source of the recovery. Once approved by the client (also referred to as the claimant), the same claim and supporting documentation can be provided to the vendor for review, and if appropriate, approval. Through this process, the present invention records communications among the parties to ensure a complete record.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0009]:

[0009] ~~While the~~ The present invention has many ~~advantage~~ advantages over the prior art[,]. ~~some~~ Some of those advantages include better control of the claim review and approval process, real-time status, immediate validation through support documentation, better claim tracking for current and historical reports, reduced time for claim deduction, ~~reduces~~ reduced audit expenses associated with copying, reduction in time required by a client to meet with auditors to review claims; simplification and organization of difficult to track recovery documentation; increase in speed of the vendor approval process; attachment of back-up documentation with the claim, such that a vendor need not wait for separately provided back-up information corresponding to a claim; providing a client with better control and up to the minute status of claims, and provides

electronic tracking and documentation of recovery status; and improved vendor relations through an easier to use and cleaner claim process.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0040]:

[0040] The present invention provides methods, systems and computer program products for web-based claim review, validation, and approval, all of which can be performed in expedited manner. In the present invention, each claim is packaged electronically along with all relevant supporting documentation evidencing the basis for the claim. The claim and relevant back-up information are made accessible to the client via the Internet using a web browser. The client can access, review, validate and approve each claim at her or his convenience. Once reviewed and approved by the client, the claim along with its appropriate documentation is retrievable by a vendor for review, validation and approval. Because this process occurs via the Internet, the claim and its supporting information are easily accessible and available to all parties, which can view the same information and understand the source of the recovery.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0043]:

[0043] The claim processing system 10 includes a web server 20, an e-mail server 22 and a database 24. The components of the claim processing system 10 may be collocated on a single computing device, such as a server or personal computer, or distribute over a LAN and/or WAN between multiple computing devices. Further, the components of the claim processing system 10 may be distributed themselves, such as database 24, which may comprise multiple databases operating under the control of a single <u>database application</u> or multiple database applications.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0044]:

[0044] The web server 20 comprises a claim manager 26 and a document viewer 28. The claim manager 26 comprises the logic implementing the claim review, validation and approval

functionality of the present invention, as described herein. The viewer 28 can be any viewer suitable for the secure viewing of document or images over a network. For example, the NetVue™ server commercially available from AccuSoft Corporation, Northborough, MA, may be suitable. Additionally, the BravaViewer from Informative Graphics ~~Coporation~~ Corporation, Scottsdale, AZ may be suitable. The viewer 28 enables the auditor 12, client device 14 and vendor device 16 to remotely view documents stored in database 24.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0049]:

[0049] Because all communications and activity associated with a claim can be recorded by the present invention, reports pertaining to ~~virtual~~ virtually any aspect of the process can be generated. For example, the auditor may want to generate reports pertaining to how long it takes to get a claim approved and which steps take the longest, whereas the client may want to generate reports pertaining to claims generated by vendor. If desired, reports can also be generated pertaining to vendor related issues, such as total claims approved.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0050]:

[0050] FIG. 3 provides a flow diagram of an illustrative embodiment of step 40 in FIG. 2, which begins at step 50 with obtaining electronic copies of the support documents for an audit. The documents are then utilized to identify claims and to create a record of each claim, as indicated by step 52. In step 54, one or more of the claims then are packaged for delivery to the client. An e-mail notice is then delivered indicating that a one or more claims are ready for review and approval, as indicated by step 56. The e-mail notice may be sent to the client and/or vendor. In the illustrative embodiment, the e-mail notice is initially sent to the client, and once approved by the client, an e-mail notice is sent to the vendor. Each individual audit will have rules imposed by the client, auditor and maybe even the vendor as to the process flow for claim approval, as well known in the industry. For example, the client may be pre-approved for a claim under a certain dollar amount, and therefore, such claims can be delivered to the vendor initially.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0052]:

[0052] FIG. 4 provides a flow diagram of an illustrative embodiment of step 42 in FIG. 2, which begins at step 60 with the client reviewing the claim, which in the illustrated embodiment is via a web-based interface such as a web browser. The review is initiated in the illustrated embodiment by the client selecting a link imbedded in the e-mail notice sent to the client's e-mail account. The link is a web address on the secure web server 20 of the claim processing system 10. The client logs into the password protected server to gain access to their claims. Detailed information about each claim is stored in database 24 and is presented to the client, as described in further detail below with reference to the illustrative user interfaces. At step 62, the client has the option of viewing the documentation supporting the claim or uploading additional documentation related to the claim. If the client chooses to view documentation, the documentation is retrieved from the database 24 and presented to the client by the viewer 28, as indicated by step 64. Alternatively, if the client is uploading documentation, that document is received and stored in database 24 and the associated claim record is updated. Next, [as] at step 66, the client has the option of reviewing and/or submitting a comment and/or response to the claim(s). If the client chooses to review/submit a comment/response, such activity is processed and appropriate notifications are sent, as indicated by step 68. Lastly, at step 70, the client has the option of approving, modifying or canceling the claim. This action, if chosen, is processed at step 72. It should be noted that the options of step 62, 66 and 70 are sequentially independent of one another in that the client can act upon these options in the order desired, and is not limited to any particular sequence. The illustrated flow diagram ~~included~~ includes a sequential relationship for purposes of simplifying the illustration. As will be appreciated upon review of the illustrative user interfaces, these options are independently selectable by the user.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0053]:

[0053] FIG. 5 provides a flow diagram of an illustrative embodiment of step 44 in FIG. 2, which begins at step 80 with the vendor reviewing the claim, which in the illustrated embodiment is via a web-based interface such as a browser application operated by the client. The claim at this point may have been approved by the client, though it is possible that certain claims will not require client approval prior to delivery to the vendor. The review is initiated in the illustrated embodiment by the ~~client~~ vendor selecting a link imbedded in the e-mail notice sent to the ~~client's~~ vendor's e-mail account. The link is a web address on the secure web server 20 of the claim processing system 10. The ~~client~~ vendor logs into the password protected server to gain access to their claims. Detailed information about each claim is stored in database 24 and is presented to the ~~client~~ vendor, as described in further detail below with reference to the illustrative user interfaces. At step 82, the vendor has the option of viewing the documentation supporting the claim or uploading additional documentation related to the claim, such as a pricing or order for the subject transaction. If the vendor chooses to view the documentation, the documentation is retrieved from the database 24 and presented to the vendor by the viewer 28, as indicated by step 84. Alternatively, if the vendor is uploading documentation, that document is received and stored in database 24 and the associated claim record is updated. Next, [as] at step 86, the vendor has the option of reviewing and/or submitting a comment and/or response to the claim(s). If the vendor chooses to review/submit a comment/response, such activity is processed and appropriate notifications are sent, as indicated by step 88. Lastly, at step 90, the vendor has the option of approving, modifying or canceling the claim. This action, if chosen, is processed at step 92. It should be noted that the options of step 82, 86 and 90 are sequentially independent of one another in that the vendor can act upon these option in the order desired, and is not limited to any particular sequence. The illustrated flow diagram ~~included~~ includes a sequential relationship for purposes of simplifying the illustration. As will be appreciated upon review of the illustrative user interfaces, these options are independently selectable by the user.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0056]:

[0056] FIGS. 6-27 illustrate some of the graphical user interfaces provided by the web-based review and approval of the present invention to access, review, comment on, respond to, edit and approve claims, and to identify, view and upload their respective back-up information, according to one embodiment of the present invention. It will be appreciated that the graphical user interfaces are used by clients, auditors and vendors/buyers for reviewing, editing and approving claims and their associated supporting documentation. The interfaces are web-based such that the clients, auditors and vendors/buyers can access the interfaces via the Internet, at any time, and from any location. The clients, auditors and vendors/buyers are described herein generally as users. It will also be appreciated with reference to the interfaces that some of the functions described herein are only available to some of the users accessing the interfaces. As an example, vendors/buyers may not <u>be permitted to access</u> confidential client information or information relating to claims not associated with the vendor.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0063]:

[0063] The claims may be searched and filtered by the auditor by selecting the search button 114 or selecting a pre-saved search (i.e., filter) via pull-down menu 116. When the auditor selects the search button 114, search interface 120 of FIG. 10 is presented to the auditor for defining the search query. Once the auditor has specified the records that he or she wishes to view, the filter and other grid settings can be saved by clicking a save filter button [122] <u>121</u> of the claims manager interface 106 and specifying a name for the filter.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0067]:

[0067] From the claim detail interface 130, the auditor may also approve a claim by selecting the Enter Approval button 142, which takes the auditor to the approve claim interface 160 shown in FIG. 14. At this interface, the auditor can approve the original claim amount or insert and

approve a different claim amount, and submit a comment. Once approved, then the claim can be packages packaged and sent to the client and/or vendor from the claims manager interface 106, as discussed below.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0072]:

[0072] In the processing of claims, as discussed above, each client will have their particular rules regarding approval. For example, a client may not require its approval over claims below a certain dollar value. Alternatively, the auditor may require sole approval rights over certain claim types. There also may be vendor requirements that must be considered in the processing of claims, such as the length of time that a claim is considered valid. Regardless of the processing limitations, the claim manager of the present invention is highly configurable so as to enable most any claim processing scheme. In most case, claims will be initial initially sent to the client for approval prior to being sent to the vendor. Accordingly, the following discussion will discuss the claim processing at the client and the vendor, though the present invention is not limited to any particular processing order.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0073]:

[0073] The client receives an e-mail notice, such as the one illustrated in FIG. 19, once the auditor submits a package identifying the client as a recipient. The e-mail describes the claim package by the number of claims and the total amount. The e-mail also provides a time-limited link 194 to allow the client to access the claim package, such as through a web browser. As with the auditor, the client is presented a log-in page and project list interface, similar to interfaces 100 and 102. Once the client successfully logs into the claims manager application, commercially referred to as ClaimDex^{TM}, the client is presented with a client claims manager interface 200, as illustrated in FIG. 20. The client claims manager interface 200 provides substantially the same functionality as the auditor claims manager interface 106 though it does not have the Package Selected Claims button 190. The client claims manager presents the client

with multiple views and search capability just like the auditor claims manager. The claims

viewable by the client, however, are only those claims packaged for the client by the auditors.

The client may open a claim to review the claim details via a claim details interface 210, as

illustrated in FIG. 21. Again, this is substantially similar to that presented to the auditor. The

client may respond to the claim by selecting the Respond to Claim button 212, which will take

the client to the add comment/file interface [214] (not shown), and approve the claim by

selecting the Enter Approval button [216] 214, which takes the client to the approve claim

interface 218, as illustrated in FIG. 22. It will be appreciated that the add comment/file interface

for the client may be substantially similar to the add comment/file interface 182 for the auditor

that is depicted in FIG. 16 and to the add comment/file interface 260 for the vendor that is

depicted in FIG. 25. The add comment/file interface [214] and the approve claim interface 218

(depicted in FIG. 22) may operate in substantially the same manner as the corresponding

interfaces presented to the auditor, as discussed above.

Please make the following changes to Paragraph [0076]:

[0076] As with the auditor and client, the vendor must log into the claim processing system 10

via interfaces substantially similar to those illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 7. The vendor is then

presented with a vendor claims manager interface 250, as illustrated in FIG. 24, which presents

all the claims being asserted against the vendor and provides the search, export and print

functionality provided [y] by the auditor and client claims manager interfaces. The vendor,

however, is not presented with the same activity buttons 122 as the auditor and vendor. The

vendor is presented with two activity button 122 , an Add Comment/File button 252 and Open

button 254.